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VICTOR,

The Little Orphan


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VICTOR,

THE LITTLE ORPHAN.

VICTOR,

THE LITTLE ORPHAN;

OR,

THE NECESSITY OF SELF-HELP.

BY

LIZZIE GLOVER.

" Despise not little sins; the gallant ship may sink,
Tho' only drop by drop the watery tide it drink."
TRENCH.



London:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1876.

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PREFACE.

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A Preface has somehow come to be regarded as so necessary to introduce author and reader, that we at least shall not venture to set the pleasant rule aside. In this instance, however, but few words will suffice; for Victors's life-story is one that it is hoped may win its own way to the hearts of those who shall give him their confidence. To no particular class of readers is it exclusively addressed; but children, as well as those who are already nearing the border-line of manhood and womanhood, may find the narrative specially interesting and helpful. Helpful; yes, that is the cheery word we would use: and when is the story-teller better employed than in striving to assist the reader haply to discern more clearly life's every-day duties, and fight the more nobly and trustfully the battle in which all may be victors, through Him that loveth us. "Tears may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," is a promise of which we but slowly learn the full sweetness; yet how often, despite earth's

sorrows, the Good Father richly dowers with blessing those who in simple love and faith struggle for the right.

"'Tis first the good and then the beautiful,
Not first the beautiful and then the good;
First the rough seed, sown in the rougher soil,
Then the flower-blossom, or the branching wood."





VICTOR, THE LITTLE ORPHAN.

In one of those narrow streets of London that are surrounded by lanes, crossing one another, in which the houses are all built so close together that you can hardly tell where one begins or the other ends, I once found myself at the door of one of the most dismal and wretched looking. The place and the surroundings were forbidding in the extreme. The noise of the ragged, bad-looking people at the doors, lounging about as though time was of no value, and looking at me as much as to say, "What do you want here?" made me feel as though I must retreat, and venture no farther, but by a struggle I overcame my hesitation, and in another moment found myself asking where a little fellow by the name of Victor Thomas lived.

It was a long time before I could get an answer to my question; some said, "Oh, there is no one by that name up this way;" others only stared fiercely at me, and told me "not to come bothering there about where bits of boys lived." Many times did my heart sink

within me, and I felt I must give up all hope of findin my little friend. Indeed, I was turning my steps homeward, when suddenly I stopped, and something within me seemed to say, "Go and have one more try." Weary as I was, I could not bear the thought of returning home without accomplishing the object of my visit, and perhaps the little fellow starving or dying the while with the cold, which was intense.

While these thoughts were passing through my mind, I was slowly retracing my steps to the dreary hovels I had just turned to leave, and now a short way in front of me I saw a house rather larger than the rest, and slightly cleaner in appearance, so was tempted to knock and again repeat the question of "Does Victor Thomas live here, please?"

Great was my joy that I had made this last effort, and that it had proved successful. Poor Victor lived all alone in a little room at the top of the house. The woman who was my informer went on to say that he had lost his father and mother, his mother dying at that nouse, and being buried from there only a week ago.

You will say, "Well, but if the lad was your friend, and you took all this trouble to find him, you surely knew that." I will tell you how I knew him. I had only seen him at the corner of one of the streets of London, as his employment was selling brooms, and often had I passed him, with his bright eyes and open countenance, such as none but really honest little fellows could have. He would look up at me with those large, brown

eyes, as much as to say, "Oh, won't you give me something? do have pity on me," but he never begged. I had several conversations with him, and that is how I knew his name, and that he lived in the street I have just described; but I did not know his parents were dead. The reason for my now going to seek him was that I had missed that little bright face from its old accustomed place, and so was tempted to go and see if anything was the matter. But let us now seek the little lad himself.

First, to get to his room I had to go up several flights of stairs, and they were so dark that at times I could only find my way by feeling, while there were so many turns that in the course of my struggle to reach the top I received several knocks, and many times had quite to hang on to the piece of wood at the side to prevent my falling. At last the uncomfortable journey ended, and I found myself at the top, and could see, by straining my eyes, a broken door—just broken enough to let through a gleam of light. I gave a gentle tap, but could not hear a sound from that room, though the noise below was anything but pleasant—the screaming of children, scolding of mothers, and all such noises as any of you who have entered any of these dwellings may have heard. After a moment's pause, I tapped again, and this time I could distinguish a soft voice asking, "Who is there?"

I replied, "I am one whom you have often seen pass

you when selling your brooms, and have had several conversations with you; may I come in?"

"Oh, yes; do, please, if you can find your way," was the quick answer.

In a moment I was sitting by him, but I do not think I ever saw such a change in any one in so short a time. There he lay on a mattress placed on the floor; and, save one chair and an old broken-down table, there was no furniture in the room. The window was so very small, and so dirty, that it let in only a very poor supply of light, but still there was sufficient to allow of my seeing the poor changed boy. His face quite brightened at the thought of seeing some one to whom he could tell his troubles, for the people below never said more to him than they were quite obliged. After taking off my jacket and putting it to form a pillow for him, so that he could the better talk to me, I sat down in the chair by his side, and listened to his sad story. He told me his father had died about a year before, and his mother only a week ago. Now he was left an orphan, to earn his own living as best he could. Since his mother's death he had been ill, indeed there was no need for him to tell me that, I could see it. He had been out in the cold wet too much, and the trial of losing his mother, of whom he was very fond, was another drawback to him. Still, he uttered no complaining word. There he lay; no green trees to look out on; all he could see was a chimney from one of the neighbouring houses, and the room he was in was cold and miserable in the

extreme. There was no fire-place, and not even a small piece of carpet for his feet. The covering for his bed, too, was scanty, only an old dress of his poor mother's being thrown over him. It was, indeed, a pitiable sight. Little do some, who have bright homes and abundance of all they want for their comfort, think of the misery and hunger some of these poor people go through; yet, if they could deprive themselves of some little thing during the year, and give the value of it to the poor, how much more real happiness would they have, feeling they had been the means of making even one poor family a little more comfortable. But no! many a gaily-dressed lady will pass along the streets of London; will go into the shops and buy costly dresses, warm furs, &c., and never give so much as a thought to the many poor half-starved creatures she may meet on her way. Such children of fortune are so wrapped up in self that not one moment can they spare to pity or even think of the sorrows of the poorer classes. It would be a bad thing for these poor outcasts if all "well-to-do people" were of the same mind. But no, thank God! there are some who are very different; who, even if they cannot give much themselves, will work hard to get help from others. But I must go on with my story.

Poor Victor now remembering who I was, and getting to feel at home with me, told me how his mother left him enough money to pay for his room for two weeks, but that was all; and having been ill, he had earned no

money to pay for the coming week; and the owner of the house had said she should turn him out if he did not pay the following Saturday. He had had scarcely anything to eat, a small crust of bread and a mite of very uninviting fat bacon, being all I could find.

I read to him from a little bible I found by his side, and asked him several questions, all of which he answered so readily that I felt still more interested in the dear little fellow than before, and told him I would leave him 5s., to pay his rent for some weeks, and then I would send him, or bring him on the morrow, some food and a blanket. Poor little lad, he was so over-joyed he could hardly speak. He begged of me to come again and see him very often, and then, after offering up a short prayer for his recovery, I left him, promising to return the next day.

It was now quite dark as I left the house, and I could scarcely find my way out of the winding street; however, I succeeded at last, and, taking a cab, was soon again at my door. I lived at home with my father, mother, and one sister. It was rather a large house in the East-end of London; my father was a Coal Merchant in the City. When I found myself once more sitting in the old room by a large fire, I related where I had been, and the sad sight I had witnessed, and my sister and I decided to drive the next day to Victor's little room, and take him some clothing, and food to nourish him.

That night, as I lay in bed, I thought again and again

of my interview with Victor, and the next morning found me awake early, and preparing the parcel to take to my little friend. No sooner had the clock struck nine than we drove off, and in about an hour, were once more in the stifled chamber. Picture to yourselves this poor lad, seeing us come in, and undoing our presents for him. The tears trickled down his thin cheeks, as he said "It cannot be true; it must be all a dream; why should any one care for me and bring me such treasures?" Never before had he seen such a warm blanket, or tasted such good meat. We soon covered him over with the new clothes, and then persuaded him to take something to eat. He said he had slept better and felt stronger after his night's rest, and decided if he had another good night, to sit up a little while the next day.

Thus a week passed on, and then finding him rapidly gaining strength, I one day told him, that, now as he was not very strong, we thought it would be nice for him, and a more suitable employment than his former one, if he would come and be with us. He would have to clean the knives and boots, and occasionally go errands for us. Then, we had a little room over the stables, where he should sleep, and he would receive 3s. a week, but he must keep very clean, steady and industrious. At once he consented, and promised to do his very best. I then left him, arranging he should be at our house the following morning. When I had gone, Victor told me afterwards, he could not

believe the good news could be true. At last, finding it was not fancy, but reality, he set to work to get ready. He just put his few books and clothes in the blanket we had given him, and then sold his mattress to the landlady at a very cheap rate, threw his small bundle over his shoulder, bid adieu to his old room, and left; feeling he had now a start in life, and would from that time see how hard he could work, and at last rise to take some possession in the world.

Now, let us follow him through life, and see for ourselves if we think he made good use of his time. He was now fourteen years old. My father met him at the door the morning of his arrival, and the first thing he did, after telling him where and how he would have to do his work, was to take him to the little room which was now to be his, and then gave him a set of clean clothes to start with, saying,—

"Now, Victor, you must take care of those, and then work hard, and be able soon to buy yourself some more things needful for your comfort."

A short time after I went to the shed, where the knives were cleaned, and there he stood, so smart in his new clothes, that I had to look twice to be sure it was the same little fellow that I had seen so many times before standing at the corner of the crowded street.

He had nearly got back his old looks; indeed, his appearance altogether soon showed that the clear atmosphere was doing much for him.

Two years passed, and Victor had now risen to foot-

man, and was getting quite a good salary, when something happened, the which I will tell you. Since he had been with us he had formed a friendship which proved a most unfortunate thing for him. Not many doors off there was a large house, and several servants kept. It was with one of these—Jack Pitt—that Victor went, and it was he who led him on into sin. Jack, I am sorry to say, was a very wicked fellow, and his great delight was to try and get Victor to go with him, and give up all his good ways.

It was a very cold, dreary night; the snow lay some feet deep on the ground, and the wind seemed to drive you back to your home as soon as you went outside the door.

Jack met Victor just going into his little room, and stopped him, saying,—

"Come, old fellow, the night is dark and chill,—don't go shutting yourself away there all alone; come with me. I will take you to a warm room, with a bright fire, gas burning, plenty of comfortable seats, and all you can want on such a night as this. We will soon return; do not hesitate, you will find plenty of good companions there you can talk to."

Victor, I am sorry to tell you, consented to go. This evil companion had been leading him on gradually but surely away from that narrow path he had before so happily walked in. Ah, how many persons are ruined by choosing evil companions, and not having the courage to use that one little word "*No*," which, though so

simple, is yet so hard to say in the time when it would often be the saving of many a young man.

If Victor had said firmly and boldly, "No," what a world of trouble and shame he would have saved himself from! but as it was, he went off with Jack, all the time feeling a something which made him a little uneasy. How often does our conscience remind us that we are doing something which we really know to be wrong, but we try hard to think it right, because it is pleasanter to us.

Yet how fleeting is the pleasantness,—how soon does it end! When we find ourselves rather worse off than we were before, and to drive away our wretchedness we take up some novel or worthless book, and consequently add sin to sin, instead of going at once to the Mercy Seat and there confessing our faults, and resolving, with the help of our Heavenly Father, to "turn from our wretchedness and live."

Poor Victor was now to be seen associating himself with some of the lowest of mankind. Once in this lighted room he was so taken up with watching the different characters, listening to the low songs which were being sung by some half-drunken men, and trying to understand the gambling that was going on, that he soon shook off the restraint he at first felt. He was now joining in a glass of beer with Jack, and before half-an-hour was gone—wasted,—he was himself a gambler!

Thus sin leads on to sin. Little did he think what

would befal him when he consented to go with Jack; he did not think he had then put his foot on the first step to ruin, and that that night, instead of sleeping comfortably in his own little room, he would be in a small dark cell, shut in by walls and bars he could not push through. But so it was. Poor fellow! he had stayed on and on, excited by drink, until he was at last turned out for disorder, and was found by a policeman some hours later in a gutter, and taken to that wretched place to be confined in, which leaves a lasting disgrace on any one.

Jack, in the meantime, had soon forgotten his friend. He had left earlier, as he was obliged to go to his master's, and he did not know what he had brought on Victor.

The next morning we were all surprised at not being able to find our footman. We looked about and enquired, but could not find out anything about him; there was his room left as he had left it the morning before. We could see he had not slept there, but no clue could we find to where he had gone to. I indeed felt grieved to think perhaps I had lost for ever my old friend, in whom I took such deep interest, and whom I felt sure was appreciating every kindness shown to him. It could not be he had run away; he, the honest, plodding Victor. Oh, no; such thoughts as these I could not for one moment entertain. All at once I remembered I had, on one occasion, seen him with Jack, so

determined to go and ask him if he could give me any clue to where Victor could have gone.

I went to the large house and asked if Jack was there, and if I might speak to him for a minute; but he was gone home, they said, to dinner, and would be gone an hour. However, they told me where he lived, and I thought it would be a splendid chance of seeing him. All the way to the cottage, about a mile, I pacified myself with the thought that now I should hear something to help me in finding out where Victor had gone. But I was disappointed, for on reaching the cottage, his wife told me Jack had been home just for a few minutes, but was now again gone out, she knew not where.

If these wives would try and make their homes clean and comfortable, be they ever so humble, and themselves be bright, and always have a warm welcome for their husbands on their return from their work, do you not think things might often be different? Would not the result be that instead of the men hastily eating anything they can find, and then instantly—without even a smile for their wives or children—going off almost mechanically to some public-house near, and there remaining until the clock reminds them they must go again to their work, having wasted both money and time. Would, I say, the result not be that they might be induced to stay by their own fireside. They would thus be far happier and better off; they would come to feel that they had a home they valued, one in which

they would always be comfortable, there enjoying the society of their wives, and if they had children, teaching them that example which speaks louder than precept, that their homes was to be to them a place where they could always be happy, and where they could spend many profitable evenings.

I think parents are not careful enough in the bringing up of those who are entrusted to them. Children are quicker to see and understand than many think, and the child that sees his father go to a public house will assuredly grow up with the idea that it is quite a right place to go too, or father would not be there; and thus the child is often found, at an early age, standing about at the doors of some low beershep, looking for father. I once heard of a little boy whose mother was dying, and no one could find her husband. The poor woman was longing to see him to say good-bye; but no! he had gone away, and had almost forgotten his wife. At last the poor woman, almost wild to see him, asked her child to go and try to find him, and quite naturally the little fellow went to a door where he had so often been with his father, and called him loudly, then hurried back home, running into his mother's room, saying, "I have found him—here he is." But it was too late; in those few minutes she had passed from life.

CHAPTER II.

VICTOR may now be seen hard at work in a boat, just started for America. The morning he was let out of his imprisonment his shame was such that he could not return to his master's. He waited at the corner of a street a few minutes to see Jack, and tell him where he was going, and then he was off, his head bent low with grief and shame, and all his former brightness gone. He now meant to work his way over to America, and then try and get something to do out there, and not return until all had forgotten him—perhaps never.

"No, Jack," he said, "I can never face her again. She has been so good to me. I have written her a letter, and here it is. I have no stamp, so you give it to her. Tell her I am gone, and in great grief. Oh, do not forget it,—maybe she'll write me some day. I have asked her to take care of my few things for me. You, Jack,—oh, never go inside that place again, or it will ruin you. I forgive you for asking me to go, but shall expect you to show me your sorrow by never going there again."

But Jack was so hardened that he left Victor, and thought no more of what he had said. He put the letter in his pocket, and, I am sorry to say, resolved at the same time, not to mention anything to me about

Victor's departure, his conscience telling him he would be blamed. He still went on in his own way, and did not trouble anything about him to whom he had brought such trouble.

That evening found Jack as usual in his accustomed seat, drinking and gambling with those evil companions.

All that day, and the next, I was walking or driving about to places where I thought Victor might possibly be, but all to no purpose.

My father now decided he must get another man in Victor's place, and he went in search of one. It was not long before he found a young man he thought would do, and so once more we settled down, I with the faint hope of soon hearing something of my old friend, though at times I gave up in despair, and thought he must be drowned, or killed in some other way. When our friends do wrong we are so loth to see the evil until we are really obliged to. Before a strange man came in I went to the little room, and after looking round at the forsaken books, &c., I began at once to collect all that had been Victor's, and put them safely into a drawer in my own room to keep, that if ever he should come to receive them I might place them in his own hands.

And so some six years passed on, and I heard nothing of Victor. I often saw Jack, and talked to him of the lost one, but he appeared to know no more than I did myself.

That summer, my father's health having been very poor all the winter, we went to the sea-side for two

months. Many a happy morning did we spend on the beach, watching the waves dashing with fury against the machines, boats, &c.; anon, tempted to put down our books or work, to watch some little children at their happy frolic.

My father's great enjoyment was to watch the different characters on the sands, and many a little group did he sketch in a small book he always carried in his pocket. The difference in the atmosphere seemed to work wonders for him; before he had been there many weeks he was quite like a different man. All the gloomy looks and complaints, which before he had been suffering from, now seemed to take to themselves wings and fly away. My mother and sister were both well and strong, and used to walk and row about as if they were quite used to it.

But this happiness was not to last for very long. One morning we all went as usual to the sands, with our various enployment, and after we had been sitting there for some time, my sister and father thought they would go out for a row. It was very rough, but they were good sailors, and imagined they would enjoy it. They hired a small boat and a man, and we watched them start off. They said they should be gone an hour; and my mother and I sat where they had left us for some time past the hour, and, then seeing no sign of them, we began to feel very uneasy. My mother at last went and asked an old sailor, whom we knew, if he would go out in the same direction they

had gone, and see if he could find them, for by this time it was even much rougher than when they started.

My poor mother was in a terrible state. "Oh Clara," she said to me, "they are lost, I am sure, I am a widow, and my dear child is taken from me; I shall never be happy again." It was a long time before I could pacify her, I myself feeling I had heard their voices for the last time in this world. I could not persuade her until quite dark to return to our lodgings, and then she was frantic with grief.

At about ten at night our uncertainty was removed. The faithful old sailor came in bearing my sister. She was alive, but very ill; as soon as he had laid her tenderly on the sofa, and we had revived her a little, he told us how he had found her. "Oh, Ma'am," he said, "there was the poor thing hanging on to a piece of rock, almost dead; she could not speak, and it was with difficulty I got her into my boat. Your poor husband, with the man who took them out, is no where to be found. They must be drowned. The boat I saw turned right over. It was too rough for her, ma'am; but do not grieve too much, you have your daughter, and your good husband will meet you some day in that land yonder. I know he's as happy now as can be; bless you, ma'am, he's with those angels yonder, joining in the hymns they sing."

And so the old man left us; and then I gave my mother some brandy, as she was by this time quite faint and ill, and, after some long time, succeeded in

getting her to retire to her chamber; and then I got a little bed and put up in her room for my sister, and after the departure of the doctor, whom I had sent for, I laid her down by our mother. She hardly spoke, and when she did she was wandering. All that night I watched her closely, and did not take off my clothes. The next day she kept asking for father; she thought it was him who had brought her home; but we kept the dreadful news from her until she was partially recovered. She was ill for some time, and we prolonged our stay there for many weeks.

After three days the bodies of my father and the sailor were found, and they were both buried in a little churchyard near. The funeral was a very sad one. I and my mother, and the friends of the sailor, followed, and saw the last of those two whose end was so sudden and unexpected.

As soon as my sister was well enough we returned to London, as we could not again go on those sands we had so often enjoyed with father. The home seemed quite changed without that face in it, and we decided to leave it, and take a rather smaller house some few miles off, and it was not long before we were settled down in our new habitation. Mother's health was now very different from what it used to be, and my sister was quite an invalid, but I kept wonderfully strong and well, and thus could wait on them both. We had a great many friends, and they were all most kind, in fact, they were true friends to us. What a miserable

thing it would be if we could not have friends in this world; our life would be quite different. The influence which one friend has over another ought to be for good, or the friendship is not worth the having. Choose friends, but not rashly. Try and get a correct insight into their character; watch them closely for some time before taking them into your confidence; remember it is often harder to break off a friendship than to form one. If all were to think more before making friends, what much better people they would be; instead of being brought down to unintelligent uninteresting men and women, they would be often raised to fill some important position in society. The intermingling of minds and thoughts is, undoubtedly, a good thing for every one. If one has friends with whom he can enjoy at all times a good discussion, it makes him think, and thought is good exercise for the brain. We should try and obtain just, correct, and benevolent thoughts, and then impart them to others.

Look at poor Victor, how much harm his friendship with Jack did him, but now he has once more started afresh, and in a new country to him. As soon as he reached America, he went in search of an occupation. He wasted no time looking about at the new scenery, and different shaped houses, &c., in fact, he felt too ill to care much for that, for he was a bad sailor, and the voyage had been a misery to him all the way. Many times did he wish he had never been tempted to say "Yes" to Jack. He felt again and again so angry

with himself, and so bowed down with his sin, that he was only just saved, once, by the bravery of a sailor on board, having a watery grave. The third night after his departure, as he lay in his hammock, he tried to devise some plan by which he might stop, for ever, his remorseful feelings; and at last decided to rise early and go to the extreme end of the boat, and then make a plunge into the foaming sea. He arose, and after watching the foaming waves rolling one upon another, and thinking how soon he should end his life, he waited one moment, as if in hesitation, and then was gone; but the captain heard the disturbance of the water—he rushed and called for help, a sailor came, and in a moment was after him who had meant never to be seen on that vessel again. By this time all were up; the excitement was tremendous, some crying, "He is saved!" others, "No! they are both lost!" The life boat was soon let down, and in another minute both Victor and his gallant rescuer were in it, both of course quite exhausted—indeed Victor was ill for some few days; and in his wanderings he told the cause of his rash act. After his recovery he begged hard for forgiveness, and it was at last granted, and he was set to work all the rest of the voyage.

Fortune seemed to favour him now; for on reaching land, before he had been on foot one hour, he was talking to a large draper in his private room, and the conversation ended in his going there that night as a young man in the shop. Mr. Smith, his master, said if

he would try and work well, and keep steady, he would teach him to the best of his ability, and so that night he laid himself to rest in a soft bed, in a flourishing establishment.

There were two other young men in the room with him, and they rather provoked him. They thought he was a poor man, and so they took advantage of it, and tried to deceive him with all sorts of untruths. One would say,—

"Ah, old fellow, you won't be here long. Mr. S. does not mean to keep you here; he will not have such a rough scamp as you appear to be. Why, you have no clothes hardly, and I doubt if you can read. I reckon you will be gone from here before to-morrow at this time; just you see if my words do not come true!"

The other would then say,—

"Maybe he'll keep you here a time, but you won't be in our shop,—you'll have to clean the boots, and go errands. We're all well-bred gentlemen, who pace along the floor of that establishment. But still, if you want a hint, you'd better come to me, and I'll do the best I can for you. Miracles do happen sometimes, and perhaps this will be one. You've come here knowing nothing, and maybe you'll be one of those lucky fellows that fortune favours, and will stay here until you are a rich gentleman; eh, old boy,—what do you think of that? Come—speak out!"

"He won't hear you. Tell us how you came here.

Where do you come from? Are you a runaway, or what? We like exciting sea-stories;—let's hope you have one now to tell us. Come,—we'll listen; do not be afraid to tell us, we are not like those who hear and then go and make all the harm we can. You are not asleep, are you? Just tell us your whereabouts, and then you shall be left to sleep and dream as best you can."

No, poor Victor was not asleep, he was pondering over all that the master had said to him, and was thinking if he would long have to undergo the jestings of these two hard-hearted young men. He felt sure they were only trying to frighten him, and so was determined to take no heed of them, hoping they would soon be better friends, so that when they asked him to tell them all he had gone through he only said,—

"Oh, I will tell you all to-morrow, if you will only let me rest now. I have had no good night's rest for a long time, and now feel quite knocked down with fatigue."

"No," said they both together, "you shall not get off so easily as that. You just come out from under those clothes, and out with what we want to know. You shall have no rest till you've told us where you come from, and who you are."

So saying, they dragged him from his bed, and declared they would put him out of the window if he did not open to them at once.

Just at this time Mr. Smith, hearing the noise, came

up and called from outside that he wished to know the cause of the disturbance; they must open the door, or they would all be sent off to-morrow.

The two proud young men were afraid to let their employer in, for Victor, from prostration, was now lying quite insensible at the foot of his bed.

Mr. Smith called again,—

"Open at once, or I'll make you."

And so saying he gave one kick, and the door was burst open. He closed it after him, and then questioned them as to the cause of the noise, and Victor's being insensible. They both declared the fault was the new comer's. He had been saying bad things of him, their master, they said, and they had punished him for it.

Mr. Smith said he did not believe this story, but they still persisted that it was the truth, and so he left them, saying, he should have an interview with Victor in the morning, and if he found him innocent he should at once expel them from his premises.

For that night Victor was put in a room by himself; and the next day Mr. Smith came to him, at an early hour, and told him just how he had found them the night before, and asked him to tell him truthfully all that had happened, as far as he could remember. So Victor told him exactly how they had treated him, dragging him out of bed, &c., because he would not tell them all about himself, and that it was they, not him, who had been trying to frighten, by saying Mr. Smith was a

stern man, &c. On hearing this told so candidly and quietly, Mr. Smith felt sure Victor was innocent, and he told him he should send the two young men, who had treated him so badly, away that morning, and that he would keep him on, and trust he would take a lesson from them, and always try to be honest, and act the same when his eyes were not following him as when he was in his presence. He then left him, just telling him what to be about for the next three hours. He then went to his cash-box, took out the amount due to the two now about to be discharged, and then sent for them, gave them each the salary due, and told them he would wish never to see them treading his threshold again. They were now turned out to again seek a living, and went, both evidently repenting of their follies. Their homes were far away; they had been doing well; now, through their own stupid ways, they would, perhaps, for some long time have to wander about with nothing to do—a most miserable life to spend. Employment is the way to happiness in this world; it makes one's thoughts healthy, gives a freshness to one's countenance, which tells at one glance, that the worker is not one of those who go about with nothing to do, and consequently are generally found irritable and fidgetty, but one whose mind and body are both fully exercised. I would urge young men especially, directly they leave school, to seek for some employment. Never mind if it is rather a low one in their estimation; they can rise, and great credit will then be due to them, and they will feel

encouraged to go on working. We were all meant to work in some way or other; then let us persevere and see whether it will not be for our good. The best thing is to try for one's self; and I would say, do not be carried away by the talk of others. Learn both to think and speak for yourself.

CHAPTER III.

WHILE Victor was thus settling down in his new home, Jack in the old country was still going on in his evil ways.

One night I had great hopes he would have mended, he was so near death. I will tell you the incident.

He had been spending some hours in a public house, and at last was turned out. He was, of course, stupid with drink, and he had not got far on his way home before, as he was trying to cross a road, he slipped and fell, and a horse and cart coming along, driven by a very steady man, who did not see him on account of the darkness, drove over him. He at once stopped his horse, got out, and called for help. Jack was got up, but was found to be much injured, his back so much so that the doctor feared he would never again be able to walk. It was a long time before he was again conscious, and when he woke found himself lying on his own bed, unable to move. The man who had driven over him was standing looking at him, and he then spoke to him and told him what had happened.

"Ah," he said, "it is all caused by that horrid drink. Never again must you touch it; this is a lesson sent to remind you of the wretched way in which you have been living, and to warn you to repent. Resolve never

to enter one of those wicked places again. You narrowly escaped death; if you had died then you would have been utterly lost. But your God was so gracious that He has given you another chance to redeem your lost character, and live to Him. Then look to Him at once; confess your manifold sins, and ask His forgiveness; He is waiting to forgive and longing to bless."

Poor Jack now began to feel he had been wicked, but thought, as many do, that if he accepted the love of Christ, he would have to give up all former acquaintances and pleasures. It is quite true he would have to give up some of what he called pleasures, but then if he gave his heart to Christ he would no longer want such enjoyments; they would be enjoyments no longer. No doubt he would at first have to bear the scoffs and jeers of many old acquaintances, but then He who had come as a friend to him would give him strength and courage to stand boldly the jeerings of wicked ones. He would lead him in the way he should go, and remain with him as long as his life would last, finally taking him to be with Him in glory.

But poor Jack would not make up his mind to leave his former follies;—he was so hardened in sin. Ah! how many begin with one small sin, and then are drawn on to sin more and more. Indeed, there is no knowing, when once you have begun, when or where you will stop. You get hardened, and feel you do not care to be better. You are happy enough if you are what people call "gay" and "irreligious," and as long

as you can keep yourself going, and always have a "fellow" to go with to some beer-shop, or some place of amusement. Thus men go on, never thinking of the future, or preparing for it; they rush headlong on, running headlong into many, many dangers. Are there not some who would take a lesson from these poor ignorant men, and in that way save themselves from following in their footsteps? Think of the trouble it brings to all connected with them, the misery and starvation it brings to their wives. Look at Jack's poor wife, there; she is worked nearly to death; she has nine little ones to look after, and her husband lying grumbling up stairs. She must do something to get a living for them all, so she takes in work, and many a night does she sit up until it begins to get light in the morning to finish some order. She knows she will not have a minute all day, and so she goes plodding on, when all around her are comfortably lying in their beds. But she is changed from what she used to be, and you never now hear her complain. She looks to Jesus for help whenever her work gets low, and she has faith in Him: she feels now He will not suffer her to want. He has cared for her so long,—will he not care for her now that she is in so much trouble? And so all through the day, in all her little troubles, she knows where to find relief; she takes them at once to her Heavenly Father, and casts them all upon him, the all-pitying, loving Friend.

The poor woman's troubles were great now. Just

as her husband was beginning to get about again (for the injury to his back was found not to be so bad as at first thought, and he was now once more able to stand and get across from one end of the room to the other), just at this time the eldest girl was suddenly taken ill with fever, and the house was so tiny that of course there was no possible way of keeping the infection from the others. Kate had it very heavily; I went to see her many times. She knew no one for more than a week. At last she began to gain a little strength, and one day I asked her if she would like to sit up, to which she said, "Oh, yes, that would be beautiful;" and so, after fetching a blanket and a cushion from my house, I managed to lift her out, wrapped her in the blanket, and let her lean against the cushion. She sat there some time, and seemed better for it. The other children had not seen her since she had been taken ill. The next day I could not go to see her as soon as before, and should not have gone all day, but just as I was having my tea at home, a loud peal came at my door, and in a moment I could hear something was the matter. I ran to my room, and was very soon walking to the house with Kate's brother, and on the way he told me that Jack was lifting her from her bed into the chair, and a corner of the blanket caught fire, and she was dying from the fright, and slight injuries she had received. I ran to her little room; there was the poor mother leaning over her and bathing her head. I could see directly she could not last long. The doctor came

in, but he said he could do nothing, and before he had been there ten minutes she breathed her last. The other children had all come into her room at the noise and confusion, and no doubt would be soon laid up with fever. The mother was quite knocked up. I tried to comfort her, but she was so weak she ought herself to have been in bed, and have had plenty of nourishment. I could not see Jack, and found, on inquiry, that he was downstairs in a little back room. He would speak to no one, they said; however, after a short time, I went to him.

There was no need to tell him his child was gone; he knew it, and was now broken-hearted, but for him her death did wonders: he now became a good Christian man; his wife soon felt she could look to him for advice and comfort, such as she had never been able to do since her wedding-day; and on Sundays you might see him going to the house of God with her and his children, now able to hold his head up, and not be ashamed to meet me or anyone else. All old follies were cast aside; he was now a new man. And he could say from his heart, "Amid the throng of blessings infinite, stands this the foremost, that my heart has bled." Three more of the children had the fever, but they all recovered, and then the mother got a little rest, and soon regained her strength, and her bright looks; indeed, she could look bright now that her husband had become such a blessing to her.

One day I called to see them, and then Jack said,

"Oh, ma'am, now I will give you something you ought to have had long ago," and he pulled from his pocket Victor's letter. "There," he said, "I was ashamed to give it to you before, but now I am forgiven, there it is; do not trouble for him, he is doing well, and will, no doubt, soon return, having got enough to come back and set up in business for himself. It was all through me he went away and left you; he told me to tell you all about it, but, to tell the truth, I was afraid and ashamed to. Ah! I did him some harm, poor fellow! but we will be good friends yet."

The letter being only in pencil, I could hardly read it, it was so faint and rubbed; but I could see enough, and I felt as though my heart would break to think of my old friend being put in jail, and then going to America. Oh, if only I could know where he was now, that I could write and tell him to come back soon. Very late did I stay there that night talking to Jack of our old friend, and he, as much as I did, wanted to write and tell him how grieved he was he had ever led him on into such sin. But we must wait, I said, and perhaps some day we should hear that he was coming back, and then how much we should have to tell him. How glad I was when I read his letter, and saw that he wanted me to take care of his poor possessions, that I had taken them and put them securely by. Many times that night, after I got home in my own chamber, did I read that little worn note, and the more I read it the more I longed to see the writer. Oh, if I could only

hear from him, how happy I should be; but I could not expect to, of course. And so I wandered until I found it was early hours, and then I left the chair I had been sitting thinking in and got into bed.

I had not long been in, and was not asleep, when I heard a gentle tap at my door. I rose up in bed and said, "Who is there?" It was one of the servants come to say my sister was ill; you know she was always delicate. I threw my gown round me, and was soon by her side. There she lay, very ill; she did not speak, only kept moaning. We sent for the doctor, and he soon came, and said she was very very ill, perhaps might not last long. He stayed with us for a long time, giving her various things and telling us what to do. Mother of course was awake, and formed one of the party in the sick chamber. I tried to get her to go back to her own room and lie down, promising if Constance became worse at all to call her; but it was a long time before she would be persuaded thus to act. Now began a time of misery. My sister lay very ill and weak for six weeks. Some days she would be better, and then, perhaps, the next so ill that we would say she could not last through the day. We sent for a trained nurse, but Constance would not let her do anything for her, everything must be made and done by me, so that it was really very trying. Sometimes, when she appeared to be dozing, I would slip out and leave her for a time, but she would, directly she roused, call for me, and on my reaching her she always repeated the same words,

"Oh, Clara, do not leave me again, I cannot bear it, I shall not be here long." And so at last I went from morning until night without stirring from the sick room. At times it was most painful to see her suffer so, but all through her illness she was not once insensible.

At last, one morning in spring, just as the birds were beginning to sing their different lays, and all around was fresh and glad at the thought of the coming season, poor Constance passed away. She did not suffer at the last, but grew gradually weaker and weaker. We were all in her room at the closing scene, and she looked up at us several times; but was too weak too speak, it was indeed a happy release for her.

After the funeral, mother and I went into the country for a short time to stay with some friends, and much did we enjoy the fresh air after that close smoky atmosphere of London. And what a difference there is in the countenances of country people. One so pale and sallow-looking, and the other with such a glow of health that you can tell at one glance they do not live in any of those little dirty streets or lanes of the great city. What pleasant times we used to spend in the green fields or parks. Sometimes we would take some provisions for the day, and then not return home until we had seen the sun set. Very early would I rise then and take a long walk before the rest had assembled for breakfast. It was such a treat to me to go out and see the green trees and all the beauties of the country. Such an appetite I would come home with,

that for the few weeks I remained there, I enjoyed my meals more than I had done since we were at the sea-side with my dear father. And when the time for leaving came, I felt very disinclined to return to the little city home.



CHAPTER IV.

"Victor" said Mr. Smith one morning, "I want to speak to you in my private room; follow me." So Victor went into the same little room he had gone into that first day he had trod on a foreign shore. He sat down, and then Mr. Smith said to him, "Victor, you have served me well, and I fancy you must now be wanting to get to some higher place; will you consent to become partner with me in this business; you have seen enough of it now to tell you what it is, and, I have seen and watched you enough to feel quite safe in taking you, if you will accept the offer, as my partner; I trust we shall work together well, and the business will still prosper as it has heretofore." Victor was so struck with this liberal and unexpected offer, that it was a long time before he could control himself to speak; when he did, it was with a view to accepting it in the best way possible, and trying to show Mr. Smith how much he appreciated his kindness. It was soon all decided; and a week later you could read over the door, the names of Smith and Thomas; and all who knew Victor, expressed great surprise when they heard the news. Victor now felt an important man, and set to work now harder than he ever had before. A little encouragement, you see, does good. He was a splendid worker

before, now he was still better. Mr. Smith and his wife now very soon left their business house, and lived in a pretty little one, a short distance off, with a nice garden surrounding it. Mrs. Smith was a tall fine lady, with very gentle and loving manners, and she was always dressed in a nice, plain, elegant looking dress, with tight-fitting body, with none of those trimmings and puffings which so disfigure the dresses of the present day. She was not one to study fashion, but comfort, and wherever you chanced to meet, or see her, she always had a bright look and a cheering word to help you in your work. Ah! how few of those sensible, clever and loving women are there to be found now. But still there are some who are not so empty as others, but who have really good sound intellects. These often do a vast amount of good in their life-time, but perhaps do it in such a quiet way, that it is not known of by so many outsiders. And yet look at the influence of women. She was made to be a "help-meet for man." Her society in Christian countries has always been sought, and her tastes studied. Let us, hope then, there are many many more growing up into womanhood, who will not be carried off by the frivolities of the world, but begin at once, and live lives of great usefulness, so that when they are called to leave this earth, they may be able to say they have not spent their lives for nought. Mrs. Smith was also a good doctor. Whenever any of the young people in their business were ill, she would instantly give them something to cure them

Many a time did she save them a long doctor's bill. She had a sister very much like herself. She would often come and stay with her, and they were so fond of each other that the visits generally lasted for some weeks.

One evening when she was there, Mr. Smith asked Victor to go and take supper with them. He went. He was not bashful as some young men; and so shy that he could not enter into any conversation, but he began at once, and they all four had a most enjoyable and profitable time together. They discussed on many subjects, and in each one Mrs. Smith and her sister joined in, and made some very intellectual remarks. Victor had read a great deal since he had been in America, and he remembered what he had read, so that he was able to talk on various topics. On his return home he thought over the evening's conversation, and he was much struck with Miss Wilson, but felt it was no use for him to think of loving her, as she was so much higher in social position than he. One who had begun life selling brooms in the streets of London could not aspire to asking her to become his wife; no he must not think of her again; she would soon return to her home, and then perhaps he would forget her; but Oh! he must see her again before she left. How could he manage to? Perhaps they would come to the shop for something, and he could serve there, or if not, he must make an excuse to go to their house, in the faint hope of seeing her there. And so it was very late that night before

Victor got into bed; he had for a long time been look-out of the window, wondering how he could once more see her, who had so filled his mind.

Miss Wilson too was lying awake, thinking of her brother's partner, but she did not for one moment imagine he had thought anything of her, but yet she wanted again to see him, and the next day she asked her sister to come with her to the shop to get several little things, as she would be leaving the following day. The innocent sister agreed to go with her, and they started off; Marion feeling all the way very happy at the thought of seeing Victor; she did not doubt but that he would be there, and perhaps might serve them; but what was her sorrow and disappointment, when she found it was an unsuccessful scheme. She looked quickly round, but no where could she see him, and she had to return home without having her wish granted. She felt now she would not see him before leaving, as she had to start early the following morning. She must patiently wait until her next visit, which she determined should be soon. At every ring at the door, that evening, she listened, thinking he may be come with some message or parcel; but it was not so, he had gone out for the whole day, and would not be home until dark. However, when he did come home he went up to the house. He had not the courage to go in, but he walked about outside, hoping she might be gone to say, "Good-bye" to some friend, and he would then meet her returning. For two hours did he pace that little piece of road, and

all to no purpose. She was sitting, working and reading, in that little back parlour, little thinking the one who occupied her thoughts was outside, so near to her, and yet separated by brick and mortar.

At last he returned home disheartened; he did not know even what time she was to leave, or he would then have arranged to see her. He lay awake that night for hours, and when he slept he was dreaming of her. The next morning Mr. Smith did not come down as usual to business, so Victor supposed he was waiting to see her off first. He could not go to the station, they would all see him, and wonder why he was there. No, he must be contented to think of her, as he had seen her that evening, and live in hopes of soon being happy in her presence again. Little did he think she had been down to the shop, and really only to try and see him, so that she could sympathize with him in his disappointment. When Mr. Smith came to the shop, he mentioned that he waited to see his visitor safely start, and then Victor was tempted to say, "I trust she has gone off comfortably, sir," and felt rejoiced on hearing the answer, "Yes, thank you, Victor. She went off saying she would soon see us again."

Mr. Smith still called his partner "Victor," he said he could not say Mr. Thomas; and the latter did not want him to.

Things now went on for a time much as usual. Every evening, after leaving business, Victor used to spend a certain time in study, and then read the daily papers;

for now he had his own private room, and a very nice comfortable one it was; plenty of books, both improving and interesting, some lent him by Mr. Smith, and one or two other friends he had found; so you see he did not now waste his time. He was also very saving; you never found him spending a penny more than he was obliged. He was liked by all in the shop, and not only liked, but respected, through his steady ways. If any men were in trouble, they would be sure to be found in Victor's little room after business hours, consulting with him, as to what was best to be done. They had such perfect confidence in him, and they knew if they told him anything in private, he would never make it public.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Smith was the superintendent of a Sunday school, and used also to take the first class there. It was a large school, and most orderly, and Victor now had a class of fifteen boys. He took a great interest in his scholars, and occasionally gave them a treat, in the way of either a picnic or ramble in the summer, or a supper and a little social evening in the winter. Sometimes his class would give little entertainments, recite, read, and often write a really good and interesting paper on some subject.

If a boy was ill, Victor would constantly go and see him, taking him little things he might fancy, and reading to him. And in return for all this trouble he gained the love and esteem of his class. He was a thorough teacher ;—it was no mere form with him.

One little boy that had been very regular in coming to school, and was in his class, was taken dangerously ill and died. All through his illness Victor went constantly to see him, and the day he was buried he followed the little train of mourners.

Through the winter Victor gave several lectures, amongst the number, one "Life in London," and another on "Temperance." These lectures were all well attended, and he became a very good speaker, and

gave most interesting evenings. Those who might go to hear him always felt they would be sure to hear something worth hearing, and would not return home having spent a wasted evening. And yet he was a man who had risen from a street-crier in London,—how was it he could draw so many to listen to him? It was his own perseverance. He had watched society,—he had wasted no time in going to places of amusement, but had employed every spare minute in studying, either for lectures or discussions. He was also very thoughtful,—he would never give his verdict on any subject without first carefully thinking it out. No wonder he prospered; in business, perseverance is the secret of all success. If young men of the present day had a little more perseverance to overcome their difficulties, how much better it would be both for themselves and their associates.

That winter and spring passed away with nothing of great importance happening, but in June Mrs. Smith was very ill with brain fever, and died, after being ill only a week.

Mr. Smith was so bent down with this sad trial, having lost what he could never regain, that it was some long time before he could resume his work. All who had known Mrs. Smith felt her death much; it was so unexpected, and she had been so good to all.

"Indeed, I had grown very fond of her," said Victor, "for I now went up weekly to spend a time at their house."

Of course her sister, Miss Wilson, came to be with Mr. Smith, and nursed his wife during her illness, so Victor saw her occasionally, and he was not a little glad when he heard that she was to remain there some months, until other arrangements could be made. Everything seemed changed after the death of Mrs. S. There was no more now her bright look and kind word to look for, and Mr. Smith was so broken-hearted that he rarely talked to any one but his sister. All said it would kill him, and they spoke the truth, for it was not more than six weeks after the day Mrs. S. had died, that he was found dead in his bed.

It was a fearful blow to his sister, poor thing; she knew not what to do. Fortunately Mr. Smith had made out his will a year before, and you may think what Victor's surprise was on finding he had left him a large amount of money, and the business.

Victor now decided to at once ask Miss Wilson to become his wife, and she most readily accepted the offer. She returned to her mother, an old lady of eighty. Her father was dead, but had left them enough to live comfortably in a small house. Marion had told Victor that as long as her mother lived she could not leave her, but you see she was so old that she was not likely to live on very long. After Marion had left, of course Victor felt rather dull; he missed his pleasant walks much at first, but he soon settled down, determined to work hard to prepare the house for his expected wife.

The summer passed away very pleasantly, but in October there were tremendous floods, and at Victor's house the water was some feet deep; they could not stir out but in boats, and business was quite stopped. The water rushed right through the entrance-door and out at the back of several of the shops close to Victor's, and they had to sleep at the top of their houses. Indeed, if you had been going up the street in a boat, you might have seen three or four boats in front and behind you. One, perhaps, a baker, and he would put the loaf of bread in at the top window; at a short distance would be a butcher doing the same, a large joint of meat being put on the end of a long pole and raised up to some outstretched arm. The destruction of property was immense! You might see poor little, half-starved children looking out of the tiny top windows, longing to be free again; but they were not to be for some weeks. It was five weeks before they could walk in the streets again, and then it was a most depressing sight to see the ruin caused by the floods. Victor's shop was a terrible sight; the goods they had not been able to move were all spoiled, windows broken, some of the furniture washed right away. His loss was great, and it was a specially heavy trial to him after he had been struggling so to make his home comfortable; but I am sorry to say there were many, many more who were to be pitied just as much as he, and some even more. It took a long while to restore his beautiful building to

its former grandness, but it was done in time, and then it looked exactly ready for a bride to be brought to.

The following spring Victor and Marion were married, very quietly; there was no great show, but it was a pretty wedding; many a thousand spectators were assembled in the church on that bright spring morning. They were both widely known and respected, and the neighbours showed their respect by going to see them married, some strewing the aisles with flowers.

They went, after the wedding, for a fortnight's trip, and on their return, the house looked so bright and comfortable for them, that Victor felt not a little proud to introduce Mrs. Victor Thomas, as well as to the inhabitants, who all gave her a most cordial welcome. That evening, if you could have been there, you would have heard Victor relating to his wife, in that snug room, some of the adventures he had had, from the time that he left the little attic in London until the present. Fancy what a romantic story he could tell of his life; he, indeed, had seen changes, and had gone through not a few hardships, but, no doubt, he was better for it. A few trials do everybody good. We cannot expect to go through life all our own way without drawbacks and interruptions; without them we should grow more selfish than we already are. We want more sympathy one for another, more real sociableness. The English have, you know, always been noted for their unsociable ways. Look, for instance, into a rail-

way carriage, perhaps five or six people, all travelling the same road for miles, and yet it is most likely they will not exchange one single word the whole way. On the other hand, you do occasionally meet a very civil companion, and perhaps enjoy a pleasant conversation, and not only that, but it may be you form a friendship, which turns out to be a splendid piece of fortune for you. At all events, my advice to all who travel is, always begin (if you have companions in the carriage) a conversation; you may have some most intelligent and interesting companions, and may learn a great deal from them; at all events, try.

It is much better to have a good conversation in a railway journey than to sit and read all the time, the latter, what with the noise of the shaking, being most injurious.

Some months after Victor had been married, he and Marion were sitting over the fire one winter's evening, he reading to his wife while she was working, and at the same time listening most intently, and occasionally looking up to interpose or question, or to give her opinion, when, all at once the door was opened, and the servant announced Mr. German.

Victor looked at him in silence for a moment, but could not at all remember where he had seen him. He had not, however, to wonder long, for Mr. German, said,

"Why, do you not remember old Bob, who once

saved you from a watery grave—he's not forgotten you."

In a moment Victor had a firm grasp of his rough hand, and for a minute could not speak. At last he said,

"Come, sit down, and let me introduce you to Mrs. Thomas, and then we will have a talk of old times."

They were soon all three forming a circle round the blazing fire, and were talking fast.

"Ah," said Bob, "when I trod my foot on this land, I enquired where you were, and I could hardly believe it when they said you had this splendid business, and a most loving wife to share your happiness. I could not refrain from coming to see you in your prosperity, although I am but a poor old sailor, and I am sure, sir, I wish both you and Mrs. Thomas all the happiness possible. I trust you will both long be spared to enjoy each others' company, and I shall never relent having plunged into those foaming waters. Little did I think then what you were being saved for; but now I hear of all the good you have done, and still are doing. I feel again and again what a happy thing it was that you did not then have your wish fulfilled. Often do we think our own way would be best for us, but find by experience it would bring us to a most miserable end."

It was decided that Bob should sleep there that night, as he was not leaving until the next morning; so they had plenty of time to talk. Mrs. Thomas was, as you may suppose, most anxious to get everything nice

and comfortable for him who had saved her husband from death. She felt she could not do too much for him.

If you could have peeped into that little bedroom, prepared for the visitor, you would have said it looked like one prepared indeed by a loving hand. There was a nice bright fire in it too, so that Bob might, for once at least, enjoy a warm bedroom, and he did enjoy it; in truth, he seemed as though he could not make enough of it, and confessed he would much like to have prolonged his stay at his old friend's. But that was impossible, and the next morning he started, his friends making him promise always to come and see them when near. When he said "Good-bye" to Victor, he again told him how glad he was to see him so happy, and he was sure he would not need asking to again come and see him when anywhere near. Victor gave him a very warm shake of the hand, and as he did so slipped a little paper into it, dubbled up, saying, "There, Bob, you did what you could for me, and then I could not repay you, it was not in my power, but now it is in my power to show you my appreciation, and I am only too glad to be able to do so. Do not say a word, I would give you twice as much if I could," and so they parted.

Victor stood at his door and watched him until he was out of sight, and then returned to tell his wife what he had done. Marion was delighted; she had hoped he

would do something of the sort, and she said she trusted they might soon see their old friend again.

Thus strangely things work round! Little did Victor expect he would have such success when he was lying in his hammock so ill, nor did he ever expect to welcome his rescuer in his house. But you see we are all blind to the future, and it is a very happy thing for us that we are. Some of us would spend very wretched lives if we could see what misery was going to befall us a few years hence. Look at those poor Lollards of old, if they had seen death by fire before them; the many sailors who have watery graves; the warriors who are killed by a shot from the foe; then look at home at the poor mother who is left a widow with eight or nine children; the poor man whose house is burnt, and none of his children saved, and other similar cases too numerous to mention. Is it, then, not much the best that we should be blind to these afflictions until they actually stare us in the face! Of course we have not the anticipation of them, and that is often worse than the reality.

So Victor and Marion lived on happily together, and in the May following, there came a little bright eyed boy, with dark hair, and some slight likeness to his father, yet in more ways resembling his mother, as an addition to their happiness. So proud were both his father and mother over their first-born, that it was their great joy to watch him developing into a little playful,

mischievous fellow, full of fun, and up to all sorts of mischief. Many an hour would they watch him, and then when he was lying sleeping in his crib, they would talk about him and build castles for his future life. Very often Victor would put him on his shoulder, and carry him into the shop, much to the amusement of both baby and spectators. All the young people in that establishment were pleased to see their kind mistress' little boy; and when he was big enough for a treat he was sometimes allowed to run into the shop, and play bo-peep behind the counter; but this was a great treat to master baby, and only happened very occasionally, on a wet day, or in the evening just before saying good night. He was not a spoiled child, fond as his mother and father were of him; they were firm, and brought him up well. One word of correction was enough; or at the table when at meals, if he was doing something which called for correction, one look from his father was sufficient; he was taught from early childhood that obedience was really necessary to ensure happiness; how much better than letting him grow up to be a trouble to all who had anything to do with him. What is more disagreeable than to see a spoiled child, and feel how he will suffer afterwards, when he grows older. When he is a school boy, and when he has grown a man, he will always feel the effects of his parents' treatment, which they thought kind, but which really was

most unkind. Such parents generally find out their mistake, but not until it is too late to alter it.

When Harold was old enough, he went to a day-school. He was fond of his books, and did well, in fact so well, that he gained numerous prizes; many an elder boy feeling a little annoyed at his getting before him.

Once, at examination, Harold got on splendidly, and had more marks than any others in his class. It so happened at the close of those very examinations that the master came into the room, where all the boys were assembled. He looked very serious, and you could tell at a glance something was the matter. The anxious boys had not to wait long however, for as soon as Mr. White had sat down at the end of the long room, he produced a paper, and after ringing a small bell, which he always used when he wanted silence, he rose and said "Boys you see this paper in my hand, it is a paper I picked up in the schoolroom just after the examinations, and it grieves me to see it; it has on it several dates and events, which you had given you to write for your examiners; now, it is no use to deny it, some one must be guilty of having copied this on to the paper delivered to me, and dropped from his pocket afterwards, a most dishonourable proceeding, and it must be traced. Several papers were far better done than I expected, and perhaps one of them was written by the boy who is guilty of this deceitful action. Whoever it is I beg will come to me

in my own room. You will not go to bed to-night until I have found out who it is, no not if you sit here the night through. As to the "day boys" they will not go home, until it is found out. I thought all the boys in this school were far too conscientious and straightforward to do such a mean trick, but I find I am mistaken.

The master then sat down and looked round, the boys all glanced at each other, afraid to speak. Two boys' eyes were fixed upon Harold, as if he were the guilty one, and in a moment Mr. White seeing them, and seeing Harold slightly blush, said, "Thomas, rise; tell me truthfully is this your paper. Mind, if you deny, and I find you have done wrong, you will be expelled from this school."

Poor Harold rose, and with a quivering voice said, "No, Sir, it is not mine, I know nothing about it." He was so taken back at the thought of them thinking he had done such a deceitful thing, that that was the reason for his quivering voice and blushed countenance, and when he returned to his seat it was with a bent head, not with shame, but grief at being so wrongfully suspected. Two or three more were examined, but to no purpose. It was now getting very late, the clock had struck seven some time, and their usual hour for separation was five. The parents of the day boys were getting anxious, and several messages came, but the same answer was given to each, "Some one has

committed a deceitful action in the school, and all will be kept until the offender is discovered."

Amongst the many messengers, one had been Harold's father, and he returned home rather sad, yet feeling sure it could not be his dear boy, he was much too truthful. The anxious mother, too, comforted herself with the same thought. At last, about ten o'clock, every boy had been examined; but no one had admitted that he had done it; then the master again rose and said, "Now boys it is past ten o'clock, and no one has confessed his fault; you heard what I said at the commencement, you would not go home until I had found out who had done this mean trick; I will keep to my words; but first before deciding for you to remain here, I will ask one question—does any one suspect another, and on what grounds? One speak at a time, and do not speak unless you have some good reason for so doing."

Then one tall boy rose and said, "Please, Sir, I feel sure Harold Thomas is the owner of that paper; his examinations were well done, yet I do not believe he studied at all, and I have often seen him slipping off into a corner by himself of late with paper and pencil, I feel sure it is he."

Mr. White rose—"I can hardly believe it is Harold, he has studied, and studied hard; but still, if it is, I am much deceived in him. Harold come here."

Harold went, but hardly knew how; he was thinking

of what his father and mother would say, and if he should really be expelled.

"Harold," said Mr. White again, "tell me at once, is this your paper or not."

Harold could not speak, he felt all eyes were on him and many an ill feeling was being shown towards him. Again the master said, "This is the last time I ask you, "is this your paper or not." But poor Harold still did not answer, he was so bent down, and his throat was too full to speak.

"Very well," said Mr. White, "that is sufficient, you may go home; but never again enter my school. I am very grieved. I thought you were so different."

The boys were then dispersed to their homes, of course all talking of what they called the "row." It was a long time before Harold reached home, and when he did he stood outside for some time, wondering how he could tell those dear ones what had befallen him. At last his hand was on the door, and in a moment he was sobbing in his mother's arms. He did not speak, neither did she for a long time; he at last broke out "Oh mother, I can never go there again, he will not have me; but it is not right, I have not done it."

The fond parents felt sure their boy must be innocent, though they could not fully understand the matter, but seeing the state he was in, they asked him no more

questions, but put him to bed, telling him not to trouble, —they knew he was in the right; and then they watched him for some time, but he did not sleep. He tossed about in his bed, very ill. He had been studying hard: and then this excitement had been too much for him.

In the morning, as he was no better, they sent for the doctor, who said he was very ill, and must be kept perfectly quiet, and take as much nourishment as possible.

Victor then went to see Mr. White, and told him how he was.

The master explained all to the father; but Victor said—

"I am quite sure, sir, Harold is not guilty, and you will find out your mistake."

The master replied that he was very sorry Harold was ill, but he was afraid Mr. Thomas did not know but that his boy was guilty; and so they parted, Victor could bear it no longer.

For weeks the poor boy lay so ill, they did not think he could live; they had the house and all as quiet as possible, but nothing seemed to do,—he was insensible for many many days.

The other boys all went on as usual. They all knew Harold was ill, but none ever went to inquire. In fact I think they were afraid to.

At last "prize day" came, and once more all were again assembled in that large room, as they had been

on that day before, when Harold was so falsely accused. Many prizes were given away, and the prize that Harold had been longing for passed into the hands of a big boy.

Presently the examination prizes were given, and then the one examination was called that there had been all the disturbance about.

"William Spencer, you have gained this. I thought this, too, would have been Harold's but, you see, we have been sadly deceived."

William Spencer did not rise to take it, and there was a whisper round—"He is faint or ill," And so he was.

They took him away into another room, and gave him some brandy, which presently revived him. He then said—

"The prize is not mine,—I cannot take it,—it is Harold's. That paper was mine, but I was not man enough to own it. Expel me, or anything you like; nothing will be too bad for me, though all this time I have been suffering in my conscience from the effects of my wickedness. Oh, if Harold will only get well I do not mind."

These words so astounded Mr. White that he hardly knew what to say. He said at last,—

"Well, William, I am sorely grieved; see the trouble you have brought on that poor boy and his parents! and at the great sin you have committed; never enter

my school again. I should have made you come in the schoolroom and confess your sin before all the boys, but as you are not well, and have already the punishment, you may go home, and there repent of your wickedness."

And so he left, feeling his trial was indeed a hard one.

Then the master returned again to the schoolroom where the boys were all waiting anxiously for the other prizes, and wondering what could be the matter with William.

Great was their surprise when Mr. White told them the cause of his fainting. Of course their thoughts went instantly to Harold ;—poor Harold ! who had been expelled and made ill through the sin of this boy. And what was the cause of that big boy saying he was sure Harold was the deceitful one? Why, it was jealousy ; he could not bear the thought of a smaller boy than himself carrying off so many prizes, and so he had thought to stop him in this way. Ought not he to be punished say you? Most decidedly, and he was; he was also expelled from the school. Let us follow these two boys to their separate homes.

William Spencer had not far to go to reach his, but he was a very long time getting there; his shame would not, for some hours, allow him to open that door. At last he did, but not until he had decided in his mind that he would not tell, that night, that he was expelled.

It would be such a terrible thing to have to tell his parents what he had done. All that evening he felt very miserable, and those around him thought he was disappointed at not bringing home a prize, and that he had been working rather too hard. However, they thought it best not to say much, so they left him, and allowed him to sit over a book without talking hardly at all.

The next day, being the first of the holidays, they expected William would go out somewhere, but he did not seem inclined to settle to anything.

Presently, as they had just risen from dinner, a ring came at the door. William's colour rushed to his cheek in a minute; he was longing to escape, but knew it was too late,—Mr. White was announced.

Mr. and Mrs. Spencer gave him a warm welcome, for they had always thought highly of him, and when he was seated he said,—

"I called, ma'am, to explain to you the reason for my feeling obliged to expel William from my school; it is not at all my wish to do so, but I felt it was my duty. I am extremely sorry to lose him, and still more so under such circumstances as the present, but I trust it will teach him a lesson that he will never forget."

The surprised look on the parents' faces soon told that their son had not confessed his fault. "Well," said Mr. Spencer, "this is all news to me; William

did not even tell me he was expelled—I will thank you to tell me yourself the history of all this."

Mr. White then told him as plainly as he could the whole affair, and how that Harold was now lying suffering from the effects of the treatment.

Mr. and Mr. Spencer were much grieved, they had no idea their boy would have done such a mean trick.

"Of course," said the mother, "that is the reason, William, of your strange behaviour last evening, and to-day." But William was so ashamed he could not look up; in fact he felt now what a wrong thing he had done, and how he had made it worse by not at once coming to his mother, and there confessing his fault. Mr. White kept his word, and would not have William back; indeed his parents did not wish it, they said they should send him away at once to boarding-school. Mr. White then left, and on his way home he called at Mr. Thomas to see Harold. He found he was too ill to see any one; but he saw his father and told him all that had happened, and said how exceedingly sorry he was; but that he did trust Harold would soon recover his sad illness. Victor thanked him for calling, and said he felt from the first his boy was in the right, although he could not fully understand or explain how. They then had a long chat, and both left good friends. Mr. White after that felt he could not do too

much for Harold, and used to call every day to enquire and take him some little thing, such as grapes, jellies, etc.

William's father, too, said, "Now, William, you must go yourself and tell Mr. Thomas how sorry you are. I shall not call until you have done so. I beg you will go this morning. This was indeed a punishment. What could he say; how should he face Harold's father! He would be so angry with him! And suppose Harold was to die. Oh, he felt as though if he could say he would die instead, he would be happy. Many more thoughts of this kind passed through his mind while walking to the shop. At last he reached it, and found himself asking if he could speak to Mr. Thomas. In a moment the said gentleman came forward, and asked William to step up to a little room he had for himself at the top of the shop. All the way up that shop, which was really a long one, but which now seemed twice as long as usual, the lad was shaking from head to foot, and felt as though if the floor would open and take him in, he would be glad.

"Well," said Victor, when they were seated, "and what is your name? are you one of Harold's school fellows?"

Now was the time, so William said in a low quick voice, "Yes, Sir, I am; but shall be no longer. I am come to tell you how sorry I am that I was so wicked: do tell Harold that I am sorry; but I shall not return to school. I am expelled. I am going away from

home. May I see Harold before I go. I should be glad so to ask his forgiveness."

"Certainly, my boy, you shall see him, and I am sure he will be ready to give you his free forgiveness, and I hope it will be a lesson to you. From this time you will lead a better life than heretofore. To-morrow or next day if you come you shall see my dear boy: he has borne his illness well indeed, not once have I heard him complain; he has been very, very ill, and Mrs. Thomas and myself both felt we should lose him; but I believe the worst is over, and we shall yet see him again amongst us."

Victor's kindness soon took hold of William, and he was now sobbing like a young child; he could not go back through that long shop like that. No; and Victor did not ask him to. He took him in the house, and after a few minutes, let him out at the private door.

William went home feeling much relieved, though still very sorrowful. He told his father and mother all that had passed in the interview with Mr. Thomas, and then asked for their forgiveness, which they gave. That evening Mr. Spencer called on Victor to express his sorrow; but he found that there was no need for him to say much; his son had done all that was necessary in that way. Many little dainties did Mr. Spencer make and send to Harold, and William was always the one to take them. He and Harold were soon fast

friends, and when the day came when they must be parted, it was a sad day for both. However, they agreed often to write to one-another, and whatever happened, always to be friends.

And so William went to school about fifty miles away from home. His father and mother missed him much at first, but felt it was the best thing they could do.

As to the big boy we mentioned, whose name was Henry Grant, he left the school, but he had not gone home; he went away to a little back lane, and there stayed until it was quite dark; he then slipped into the house, his home, and up into his little bedroom, got his purse, which contained five shillings, and a few little things, and started off, meaning to go to England.

CHAPTER V.

THE boat Henry arranged to go by, he found did not start till the next morning, but he begged to be allowed to sleep on board that night, and the captain gave his consent. Next morning the boat started, Henry with it; he had now left his friends, even his parents, without a parting word; they would all be wondering where he had gone, perhaps his mother or father would die before he could return. When he thought of these things, he half-wished he had not started in such a hurry, but then he said to himself, "How could I have told them that I was never to go to Mr. White's again?" His father was rather a hard man, and Henry was, to tell the truth, afraid of him. But still he had long talked of going to England, and he thought they might guess he had gone. Mr. White would soon tell them what he had done, "But," said he, one morning, "if I had known it would have made me so ill, I do not think I should have ventured; in fact I feel as though I could throw myself into the sea." However, he soon got over that, and became a good sailor, and the captain gave him some work to do. After he had been about three days on board, he wrote a letter to

his mother, telling her where he was, and saying that he was very sorry he had done so wrong, but he hoped they would forgive him, and he hoped Harold would soon be well again; he meant to get something to do in England, and not return until he had made his fortune. He had an idea that fortunes were easily made in London, and that is where he should go.

That little home circle at home that night consisted of his father, mother, and his only sister, and they could not imagine where Henry could be: they sent to Mr. White, and he said he had gone home, and that was some hours ago. They sent to all his friends round, but no one could give any information concerning him. At last Mr. Grant went and saw Mr. White, and when he told him all that had happened, he said at once, "Oh, then I expect Henry was afraid to go home." All that night he was out with one or two friends looking for him, but all to no purpose; and so they went on, day after day, searching, but never finding, until at last they gave up in despair, and came to the conclusion that he must be gone to England. The poor mother was quite broken-hearted. It was some time afterwards that they received the letter from Henry. It was a great relief to them all, but they were still very anxious about him, but they could do nothing now but wait patiently, and hope soon to hear again.

Harold was now rapidly improving; indeed so fast that he was very soon able to return to school. Mr.

White and the boys were all very kind to him, and he worked well, and was so good in helping the others in many little ways, that he became a great favourite; and he also was a great comfort to his father and mother, and being the only boy, they made a great fuss about him. He wrote constantly to William Spenser, and received long, warm-hearted letters in return. He was sorry that Henry had gone to England, as of course he felt it was partly through him that he went, and he often said so to Mr. Grant; but he was so kind, and said that it would, perhaps, do him good: he had long been wanting to go. It was also a great trouble for Mr. White, to think of having to expel two boys in one quarter; but he was a man who always kept his word, and having once said he should expel them he would not withdraw. He was not like some people who say one thing, and then, because somebody's feelings are rather hurt, or they find it does not quite answer their purpose, turn round and make some vain excuse. Ah! those people are sure not to get on so well in the world, and they will never have such influence as they would if they were more decided. They will find their words are not taken so much notice of. Think before you speak, and do not say you are going to do this, that, or the other, until you have well thought about it, and come to the conclusion it will be a good thing to do. Now-a-days people are so fond of

talking as to what they mean to do, whereas if they would talk a little less, and act a little more, it would be far better for themselves and all around them. See how much time is really wasted in talking over one's neighbours. We are all too apt to delight in finding out all the bad qualities, and delighting in the mistakes of those around us. Would it not be better to spend the time in looking at their good qualities and trying to copy them; or in looking into ourselves and seeing what is wrong there. We should then stand more chance of improving our poor selves. But some are so apt to think that self needs no improving. "Oh no, I am so very good, I cannot expect to be any better," is what many a one has thought, and still does think. But each new year brings with it new improvement on some thing, and let us hope we shall all improve, and our successors be far better people than we are.

Henry has now arrived safely in London. He fortunately met with a situation: he has gone to an ironmongers. Of course he has but few clothes, so he will have to save and get himself more. He has written to his parents and told them where he is, and one morning he was very glad to find, on coming down to breakfast, that there is a letter for him, and, glancing quickly at the direction he saw it was from his mother. He put it in his pocket until he could get alone, and then, when he did, he read it again and again. There

was written on those pages some very good advice, and put in such a loving, motherly, way that no boy could help, however bad he might be, thinking about it, and Henry thought about this and determined to work hard, and then, if possible, to return to his old home. The bedroom Henry had was a pretty little room for a London one; only a tiny window, but just large enough to let in sufficient light for him to see to do all he wanted to. He missed the fresh air, but soon got used to the smoky atmosphere.

It was a nice bright morning in May, when Henry was standing behind the counter looking, as though he would like to see a customer walk in, when, all at once, one did, and, seeing him near, asked him for what he wanted. It was only a small purchase,—a knife. "Well," said the customer, "you are a new young man in this shop, are you not? I often come here, but I have not seen you before, and you do not look altogether like one who has been many months in London."

"Ah," said Henry, "I have not, sir; I only came over from America two months ago."

"What?" said the customer, "you came from America? I know some one there, perhaps you know him too. I cannot tell you where he is exactly, but he's out there somewhere. I suppose you wouldn't know him, his name is Victor Thomas."

"Victor Thomas! just don't I know him. His son was the cause of my coming to England."

"Well," said the interested customer. "But he's never married, is he?"

"Yes, that he is; he came over to our parts, and went into a draper's as a young man, like me, you know, and he did very well, and so the master took him into partnership. It is a splendid business; and after a time Mr. Smith, his master, lost his wife, and he was so devoted to her, that it killed him they said; at all events, he died soon after, and left the whole business to Mr. Thomas. Then he married Mrs. Smith's sister, a pretty woman, and now has a son: he's fourteen years old now I should think, and I went to school along with him; but we had a row, and I got him into a fine lecture, and made him ill, when it all ought to have been me; the consequence was, it was found out, and I was expelled from the school. Well I was ashamed to go home, so started off for London, and here you see me."

"Well, my name is Jack Pitt; I was the means of sending Victor Thomas to America; but if you will come and see me this evening I will tell you all about it. I shall be glad to see you, and I know my wife will; we live in a small cottage, but if you will not mind coming, do."

So after giving Henry his address, and telling him

how glad he was to have met him, he returned to his work, thinking over all he had heard. Jack had risen since Victor's departure, he was now gardener to a very rich gentleman, and he did well; he liked his work and took a pride in making all that land intrusted to his care look nice. Jack worked so much better after he left off the bad habit of drinking, one would, in fact, hardly have known him to be the same man; instead of a slovenly-looking untidy fellow, you might now see a sharp clean and tidy man—quite respectable. Ah, it makes such a difference to men when they drink! If they but knew how it degraded them, surely they would turn from it. See the difference it would make to their homes, and how it would increase their happiness if they would only be satisfied with that best of drinks, water. What is better on a hot summer's day than a nice draught of cold water; or a cup of tea in winter; it is most refreshing, and I feel sure, if men were to try it for a little time, they would soon feel disgusted with themselves for ever having drank beer for their beverage. See how many do live and enjoy good health without it; then why cannot all? Of course they can, but they like the drink, and so fancy they cannot do without it. They labour under a grand delusion, and some day, may be when it is too late, they will confess they have done wrong; but when we have ruined our constitution, it is then too late to alter. Let those boys

who have drunken fathers take a lesson from them, and never touch beer or wine, unless medicinally; they will never relent the determination; and then we should find the rising generation far stronger, clearer headed people, than those of the present day. How is it that one often finds children so quick and bright? Why, is it not partly because their brains are not muddled by taking beer, &c.? of course it is; it is a great mistake for parents to begin giving wine and beer to their children when young. A good many do, but it is wrong, it is teaching them to like it, and also teaching them it is right to take it. Those parents who do not know better than that how to rear up their children would be better without them.

That Tuesday evening found Henry sitting in a comfortable arm-chair at Jack's. They talked very fast until the time for Henry to return to the shop, which was eleven. Much interested were Jack and his wife, as well as their elder children, in hearing about Victor; and before leaving, Henry gave Jack the address of his long lost companion, so that he decided at once to write to him; and he said to Henry, as he let him out that night,—

"If you will come again to-morrow evening I will ask a lady here to see you."

The next evening Henry was again at the little cottage, and, when he had sat down, I went in and said

how glad I was to see him; and told him I was the one who had brought Victor from the little attic in a small house in one of the narrowest and dirtiest streets of London. It is quite true that we like to talk of those we love, and so it was in this case. It was a long time before I could make up my mind to go home.

The next day I inquired when the mail went to America, and found I had time to write a very long letter to Victor, in which I told him how glad I should be to see him again, and how, since he had gone, I had lost my father, mother, and sister; for my mother was now dead.

I so longed to hear from him, but knew I must wait patiently. I also told Henry to come and see me as often as he liked.

I did not sleep many hours that night. I was thinking about Victor, and wondering what sort of a woman she really was whom he had chosen for his wife, and if he would answer my letter, and many other thoughts, which I will not stop to relate. If the brain is excited it cannot rest. Take, for instance, one who has sat closely at some deep book, or perhaps been writing a paper or book which required much thought; perhaps he would sit at that until late at night. He then goes to bed, but he cannot sleep; the brain is tired, too tired to rest;—it has been excited. It is a bad plan for any

one to work late at night. One hears such arguing that night is the best time for brain work, but ten o'clock is quite late enough to work. It is a good plan, then, to rest the brain for an hour before going to bed, as one can then sleep and get up refreshed in the morning; when it, perhaps, would be possible to give an hour or two to our studies before the bustle of the day begins.

I once knew a man who was writing a book. He wished to finish it by a certain time, and he knew he could not unless he sat up a greater part of each night until the time was expired, and so he was so unwise as to set to work and never leave off writing until three o'clock in the morning. Then he would go and lie down until seven, but seldom sleep much. The consequence was he finished his book at the appointed time, but he also made himself very ill, and he died soon afterwards. If he had been more prudent he might have been spared to write many books; but his own imprudent ways caused his death. And there are many more who would live in just as heedless a way, but who are sometimes stopped in time either by the advice of others or by the good influence which their wives have over them.

There are some who quite ruin their health by sitting up late at nights, but they are not studying or improving their minds in any way. They sit and gamble, and not only suffer for it themselves but bring poverty and

suffering to their families. Some persons seem to give no thought to those around them,—they just study self, and care for no one else; no, not even their wives and little ones: so long as they themselves are happy, and have something to eat, that is enough.

CHAPTER VI.

Let us now look into that little bright room we have heard so much of in America. What is the cause of that sad look on the face of Mrs. Thomas, and what is the conversation being carried on. Harold is not there —only his father and mother.

"Oh," said Mrs. Thomas, "I can never part with him, and yet I know I must. Do you think it will be for very long, dear Victor?"

"No, my dear. See with what joy we shall look forward to seeing him home again;—and his letters, too, what pleasure they will give us! You must cheer up, and remember it is for his good, and he will be happy enough amongst other boys; he will soon make friends. Why, only this evening I was talking to him about his going, and he was delighted at the idea. Indeed, I think he is in a hurry for the time to come. Let us call him in with us; he is now up-stairs looking up his books to read, we will call him, and give him some advice."

Victor went out of the room and called Harold to come down. He came very cheerily, saying he was preparing to go to school.

"Well," said his father, "we have decided you shall go to-morrow; but you know, Harold, you will find a great difference at school from being at home; but you must write to us every week, and tell us any little trouble, and whatever you do be sure and try to be good; keep truthful, and always listen to what Mr. Thomson, your master, says; be as obedient to him as you would to me, and never be deceitful. If ever you do wrong do not try to hide it. We shall often write to you, and we shall think of you continually, and shall long to see you home again. You will have your friend William Spencer, and no doubt he will help you in any little difficulty.

After more conversation of this kind, Harold bade his parents "good-night," and went to bed feeling still very happy at the thought of going to boarding-school. You generally find boys do not mind going, and the first time they leave home they are so filled with thoughts of going, and preparations, and picturing themselves in a large schoolroom full of boys, that they have not time to be dull at leaving home. Certainly Harold was not; he started off with his father and William without a tear.

His mother would not let him see her tears; she kept up bravely until he was out of sight, and then she fairly broke down. She had lost, for a time, her only child, him whom she had trained so carefully. Oh, supposing he was ill, or met with any accident, and she

was never again to see him! She dared not think of these things, or she should find herself running to stop him.

She at last sat down and tried to do some work. She knew she must not give way to her feelings any more, it would soon be dinner time, and she could not let those young people from the shop see she had been so foolish and weak. When she came in to dine they were all very quiet. They were all fond of Harold, and they missed his bright eyes at the meal, but they thought it best not to mention his name. They knew what a mother's feeling is at losing her only son, even for a few months, and she did not trust herself to say anything more than she was quite obliged.

Oh, how glad she was to see her husband return, and how many questions she asked him! And doubtless if they had been twice as many he would still have gladly sought to pacify that sorrowful heart by his kind answers. He told her how he had left Harold, who had again sent farewell messages to his mother, and he had promised to write to her very soon. But you could see the father missed his son as much as his mother; he looked in vain for that boyish laugh, or that story of some adventure.

Harold slept in the same room as his friend William, for Mr. Thomson was a kind man, and he had specially arranged for this.

It all seemed very strange to Harold at first. He could not understand yet all that board of rules he saw put over the chimney-piece in his bed-room, but William was a great help to him, and he soon began to explain each one separately.

The next day, after school, they all went for a walk, and it being the first day Harold and William walked together they talked of the old times at the old day-school, and then of the doings at the new one.

Mr. Thomson was very kind to Harold, and took a great interest in him. He put him in the second class, and explained to him all the lessons he would have to learn, so that he at once gained the love of his new pupil.

Harold was not long either in making friends. Before a month was up he had five or six special ones, and he used to let them share some of the good things his mother had packed so carefully in a little wooden box, —one of those boxes which nearly every school-boy likes the look of, which generally go by the name of "goody boxes." Harold's "goody box" contained a store of nice things,—two large cakes, eggs, jams, potted meats, biscuits, sweets, gingerbreads, apples, nuts, &c.

That first few weeks not only Harold, but several others, enjoyed a share of these good things, and I expect were not a little sorry when they were told the box was empty. School-boys are such ones for cakes, and

sweets. What school-boy is there that cannot, at almost any time, eat a piece of plum cake, or a large jam tart?

Harold's first letter to his parents was a very long one, full of his doings since he left home, and lots of warm messages to all at that dear place. That first letter was read again and again, and at last carefully put away and was kept amongst some precious treasures of his mother's.

How many mothers I suspect have some of the first letters of their children treasured away, perhaps so old and worn that they now can hardly read them; yet still they are valued as being the first from their loved ones.

Mrs. Thomas wrote regularly every week to her boy. She used always to write on the same day—Thursday, because, she used to say, "I find it so much better to keep to one day; then I never forget to write. It is a certain task to be performed that day, whatever happens." And Harold always looked for that welcome letter on Friday mornings, and then it was just in time for him to answer on Saturdays, as that was his day for writing; and Harold did not write trashy letters with nothing in them, they used to be full of something interesting. He would very often give a little account of some class he had attended, or a short sketch of some lesson he had learned, and occasionally he would write all, or a part of his letter in French, for his friends to

see how he was improving in that language. He never grudged the time he gave for letters home; they were always in his best writing,—not just a scribble, as some boys send, as though they could not spend a minute of their spare time to write to their parents. No, I do not like to see that, it looks as though they had forgotten their fathers and mothers since they had been amongst their other playfellows. Nor do I think it well for masters to see the boys' letters home. I think they ought to be allowed to write just what they like, and feel the letter will not be seen until it reaches the one to whom it is addressed. If a boy thinks his letter is going to be read by the master he writes a stiff, cold, and short letter, not at all like a child to his mother. And the mother cannot enjoy it so much, as she knows he was not at liberty to write as he liked.

It was not very long after Harold had settled at school, when a letter came for Mr. Thomas, from England. He could not think for the moment whom it could be from. He tore it open, looked at the signature, and saw "Avis Stoke." He ran up to his wife who was in the parlour, and told her the joyful news.

"Oh," said he, "here is a letter from the one who first brought me from the streets of London, had me at her house as footman. It was from there you know I came here. Let us read it. See what a very long one it is."

They read it through two or three times together. Victor was delighted.

"Ah," said he, "I am glad, for my sake, Henry went to England; fancy his seeing her and giving her my address; and see, she says how very sorry she is I ever left her, but she is so glad I am doing well, and hopes we may soon go to England and see her. Poor thing! she has lost her father, mother, and sister since I left; how lonely she must be; how I should like to see her again. She says she forgives me for my sin too, what a forgiving creature she is; and my few poor things are all safe in her keeping; how I should like to go and fetch them; she must be getting old now, I'm sure; and Jack, so she says, is writing, perhaps I shall hear from him."

Victor had no sooner said so, than the servant came in and said,—

"Please sir, here is a letter; you did not see it when you took the other from the box."

He seized it; yes! it was from him,—he who had been the cause of his coming to America.

This was indeed a feast, two letters from his two old English friends. Jack's was a very long one, telling him all about himself, how he was become a changed man since Victor's absence, and how sorry he was ever to have led him on into sin, and begging him to come back to England.

Mrs. Thomas seemed just as pleased with these welcomed letters as her husband.

He had, of course, told her all the history of his life, and now she could freely join in these refreshing letters; and when evening came, and they were sitting by the fire, Victor again withdrew them from his pocket, and began reading them.

He determined to write by the next mail to both Jack and me, and he did so.

They were just as long letters as the ones we had sent him. He said he could not at present come to England, but he should hope to some day. He told us he had sent his only boy to boarding-school for two years, when he hoped he would come home and help him.

The letters were most interesting ones, and we were not a little pleased at having them. And now, no doubt, that the correspondence was begun, it would be continued.

Victor had many things to be thankful for. His wife kept well, and Harold was quite strong again now, and doing well at school. He had been there some two months, and made many friends. He was a good-tempered boy, and made himself agreeable to all; you never heard him saying hard things of his companions. One day the boys all had a holiday; they were going for a picnic. It was a lovely day, and every-

thing around was robed in summer beauty. At about eleven they all went off in different vehicles, to a park about five miles from the school. Mr. Thomson and the masters went with them, and there was great excitement at starting—with the hampers of food, and games to be put up, and arrangements made as to how best to set, and which way to go. At last all were comfortably seated in the five breaks, and they started.

As soon as they were past the houses they began singing, and it certainly, to a passer by, must have looked a very merry party.

At length they stopped; there was the entrance to the park, a little iron gate; but wait, order must be the rule.

"First break-full unload," said Mr. Thomson.

Very soon they were standing on the green bank just within the gate; and so, vehicle after vehicle was empted, until all the happy faces were together. Then the hampers had to be lifted down and carried inside, but that did not take long. Very soon the horses had returned, the drivers having orders to come back at eight o'clock; and all the lads were roaming about to find the best place for cricket, football, and various other games.

On a capital hill was a party of boys, at the good old game of cricket. They were not long in preparing for it. Coats off, wickets pitched, and sides arranged before

a quarter-of-an-hour had passed. Then, some distance off, there was another group of boys at football, a favourite though dangerous game. But what are those four boys going to do, just walking towards the wood at one end of the park? They have no bat, no ball, no, they are going in search of birds' nests, not such a harmless amusement as that of their schoolmates. I never like to see boys fond of destroying birds' nests, it is so cruel.

While the games were going on, the masters were deciding on a place to have dinner, and preparing it. It looked most tempting when it was set out. There were three nice clean white cloths laid out, a short distance from each other, on the grass, and covered with suitable things for hungry boys,—nice cold meat-pies, large joints of beef and mutton; lettuces, cucumbers, fruit-pies, and bread and cheese.

At about one, a bell was rung, and all knew that it was for dinner. There was a general rush for coats, and soon all were seated round the cloths. Mr. Thomson was a most suitable man for boys. He was very anxious to see them all happy. While they were at dinner he told them tales of his old school days, and proposed games, &c., for them, in fact, he made himself quite one of them, and they all esteemed him. All the boys seemed to enjoy their dinner, and when they had finished, Mr. Thomson gave them some fruit, and sent

them off to their games again, telling them he should come and join them shortly, with the under-masters. The lads went back to their various games, feeling all the better for their dinner.

The plates, &c., were soon all again put together, as two servants had been brought with the party; and then Mr. Thomson, Mr. Batten, and Mr. Watkins went and joined in the different games. They had some capital fun; each one appeared quite happy, and all were evidently bent on having a pleasant day without any drawback. And so the afternoon passed by, and then the bell was again rung for them all to assemble for tea.

When they were seated, Mr. Thomson saw that four boys were missing, so he enquired if any knew where they were. No one could tell; they only said they had seen four walking towards the wood. Immediately tea was finished all went in search of them. Mr. Thomson took the bell and his whistle, and as soon as he was inside the wood, he began to use them vigorously. Presently he gave the bell to one of the masters, and sent him in a different direction.

The boys were all now scattered about over the wood, but none out of all the number seemed to meet with success.

What would be done? It was a large wood, and it was now getting late. In a few minutes the breaks came to fetch them all home.

Mr. Thomson, after collecting them, told them it was best that they should go home. It was some time before all could be found, and then they would have liked to stop to help find the four lost boys, but it was best they should not. Perhaps had they, they, too, might have got lost in the darkness, or come to some hurt. One master, Mr. Batten, returned home with them, and then it was arranged that one break should return to the wood, after safely conveying the boys to school, so as to take Mr. Thomson and the masters and boys who were left behind, when they had finished their search. Of course there was great excitement that night in the school. There was no sleep until the break returned ; indeed it was a long time before Mr. Batten could persuade the excited boys to go to their rooms, and when they did, it was not the least use to say there was to be no talking, for at such a time it is difficult to keep quiet. Mr. Batten himself scarcly knew what to do. He first went to one room, then to another; then he would go to the front door and out to the large gates, and listen for the sound of wheels, and directly he heard that sound his hopes would be raised, but in a second again dashed to the ground, on finding some fly or private carriage passing.

Thus things went on for three hours. The boys were still talking at intervals, and he, every now and then, would go and speak to them in their rooms. Pre-

sently his anxiety was stopped, for a ring came at the bell.

He ran down faster than he had ever gone down those three flights of stairs before, and in a moment he was standing at the door and helping all in. He saw in an instant that something was wrong. There was one poor boy he could not distinguish, further than that he was being carried in by Mr. Thomson, the three others following, and all looking as white as possible, and very frightened. These three were sent into a little room to have some refreshment, and then to go to bed.

As soon as Mr. Batten could get Mr. Watkins to tell him how they had found the lost lads, and what was the matter with Hugh Fritz, he stole away and told the tired and excited boys all about it.

Poor Hugh had fallen from a tree, and was seriously injured; in fact they were afraid he may not live long; and the three other boys, who were with him, were all very tired and frightened,—for when Mr. Thomson found them he could only see three, one, poor Hugh, lying moaning on the long grass, with two leaning over him —trying to get him to speak; and the fourth, William Stokes, had gone in search of help, but had lost his way; so, after finding the three, they had been obliged to search for him, but at last were successful in getting them all in the break, Hugh lying on Mr. Thomson's knees all the way, so that he may not be so shaken; he

did not once speak, and several times did they think he was dead.

It was a long time before all in that school were quiet that night. Mr. Thomson and Mr. Batten sat by the side of Hugh all night, watching him closely, and giving him brandy, and other nourishment, every quarter-of-an-hour.

It was a sad ending to that happy day, and all they could console themselves with was, that it was a good thing that it was not worse. Supposing all four had fallen! And perhaps it would teach them all a lesson never to go bird-nesting again; it had been forbidden in the school not long before this time.

The next morning, when the doctor came, he said Hugh was no worse, and he thought if he was kept perfectly quiet, and took plenty of nourishment, he might yet live.

It was indeed an anxious time, both for Mr. Thomson and Hugh's friends.

His mother came and helped nurse him, and his father came to see him occasionally. They did not live many miles off, fortunately. He lay insensible for some days, and he was constantly wandering. When he was getting better, he used to ask to have some of his friends to see him, and the three who were with him when the accident happened, went in their turns to sit with him for half-an-hour, and to each of them he said he would never wish to find himself employed in that

cruel sport again, and he also begged them to cast it off.

They promised him, as he lay in that little bed, they would never take another bird's nest, and they kept their promises, and I think they were quite as happy at other boy's games as ever they had been when destroying the home of the poor harmless birds.

The holidays were fast approaching, and the excitement of the examinations had begun, when Hugh first came down stairs again. He was not, of course, allowed to go into the school-room amongst all the boys, he remained in a little parlour, so as to be kept quiet; he was very anxious to be well and strong, to return home with all the rest of his companions.

What boy is there likes to see his play-fellows go off all bright and happy for a month's pleasure, and not be able to do the same? But the doctor always told him he would be strong enough by that time if he would obey his orders, and keep quite quiet. And so he was.

When the large boxes were packed, and standing in the hall, with the cords and directions round them, Hugh Fritz's name was also amongst the number, but he did not go without a word from Mr. Thomson,—telling him he hoped it would be a lesson to him, never to be disobedient, or ever to engage in such sport again; but there was no need for much to be said. The pain he had endured taught him more, perhaps, than any words

could have, and we will hope it will always be remembered, not only by the sufferer, but by any who are in the habit of taking the life of birds. If any boys, reading this, are bird-nesters, let them think that they, too, are just as likely as Hugh to fall, and, perhaps, not only suffer intensely, but, in taking the life of a young bird or its home, will, perhaps, also destroy their own life.

Do not think it shows a manly spirit; there is no manliness in climbing a tree—be it ever so hard to climb—if the object is to bring down with you that beautiful little nest, so wonderfully made by a poor bird. No, rather scorn such cruel sport as that.



CHAPTER VII.

One morning, while the examinations were going on, Harold had a letter,—not a cheerful, comforting letter, but a sad, sorrowful one, from his father, saying his mother was very dangerously ill, and if she was not better in a day, he would send for him to come home. The joy Harold had felt at returning home for the first time from boarding-school,—the pleasure he had anticipated in telling to his dear parents all his school-boy tales, was now ended!

Oh, he must fly to her,—he could not rest here; and it was no use. Now that such ill news had come to him, his examination papers were cast aside; all former excitement at striving to reach the top of the school was nought to him. There he sat, with his head resting on his hand, feeling altogether miserable; he could not tell his grief to the boys, as he would only break down in the attempt; so he slipped away to his bed-room, hoping there to be left alone to ponder over his trouble, and anxiously wait for the next post to arrive, and bring him tidings of her whom he so loved.

But before he had long been seated in a chair, by his own bed, and was leaning down on his pillow, the door

was thrown open, and there came in, whistling, a big boy. Harold did not raise his head,—he could not, but in a moment he felt two loving arms thrown round his neck, and a voice asking him what was troubling him.

He could tell in a minute who it was, he could not mistake that voice,—it was his dearest friend, William.

"Oh, dear William," he said, "I have bad news, such bad news from home; read the letter, it is in my hand, take it. What shall I do? Suppose she were to die; I should never see her again, never again hear that sweet loving voice! Oh! I cannot bear it; I must go to her now. Will father send? Perhaps he will not be able; he, too, will be so troubled."

William tried hard to comfort him, and tell him she might yet get well and strong again, and be there to welcome him on his return home.

"But," said he, "I will tell Mr. Thomson you cannot do your lessons, and he may say you shall go home now."

And so he went down the stairs and knocked at the door of Mr. Thomson's. A voice said "Come in," and there William found Mr. Thomson all alone. He told him how he had found his friend, and asked what might be done to ease him.

The master, who was ever kind, said,—

"Ah, I am truly sorry for poor Harold; tell him to

come to me; he shall sit in here quietly, at all events for a time."

When William again stood by the side of his friend he found him sobbing piteously, and it was a long time before he could persuade him to quit his room; it needed much patience, and kind coaxing.

He at last succeeded, and soon reached again that little room, this time with Harold. Mr. Thomson spoke so kindly to the poor distressed boy, that he presently became quite calm again.

He had not been in the room an hour when a letter was brought in for him. He tore it open and took it in at a glance. No, she was not dead; but he was sure there could be no hope of her recovery. He was to go directly. Oh that she would only live until he reached once more that dear spot he had not seen for three months!

His things were soon put together, and the kind master started off in a cab to the station with him. He placed him safely in the train and gave him a book to look at on his way, to divert his mind from his mother. Poor boy! he looked already quite knocked up with crying, and yet he had before him great sorrow.

As he drove up to the door he looked anxiously out to see if he could notice anyone at the windows. Could he believe it,—the blinds all closely down? No,—it could not be? She had passed away, and he was not in time to say a word to her! Why did they not send for

him before? Oh! he could not bear it; it was too much; but he found, on entering that darkened house, it was all too true.

He did not speak; he only ran straight to her room, on his way just embracing his father without a word, and then ran on almost wildly to that room, the one he had so often sat in, and where all his things had been packed for school by her hands.

There she lay on that same bed; she looked lovely, so happy, you would not think she had borne so much pain. Harold flung himself down on the bed, and kissed her again and again, and then lay there, quite still, too bent down with grief to speak. One whole hour passed as he lay there, and then the door opened, and his father came, led him out, and in broken words told him to go down stairs with him and have something to eat, some refreshment. But it was no good; he did go down and sat with his poor father; but eat he could not. It was a pitiable sight to see that poor widower and his son talking together that evening—both so broken down.

All that passed between them and the three succeeding weeks, is too sad to relate. Harold never returned to school again, and Victor, poor lonely Victor, said one morning to him he did not think he could stay any longer in that house. Everything so reminded him of her who before had been his comfort and helper, and they decided to sell the business and set off for England.

"Ah!" said Victor, "I have lost my dearest one, now I will go and seek comfort in my old friends; will you agree, Harold, my dear boy?"

Yes, he did agree, and the next week they were on the tossing waves. It had been very sad to them leaving their old home and friends, and all had been extremely kind in helping them pack, &c., and many a present came for Victor from his Sunday pupils, or from persons to whom he had shown any kindness. He did not write to tell his friends he was coming to England, indeed it was all settled up in such a hurry that there was no time. They would take them by surprise; he remembered Jack's house, and he believed he was still in that same little place; so all the voyage over, he was picturing to himself his interview with his old friend, who was the cause of his ever going to America. It seemed to those two sad hearts a weary passage, and both were very ill all the way, so it made it doubly trying to them.

It was about nine at night when they saw the great City. They were both very glad to once more put their feet on land, and very soon they were at Jack's door. He was surprised at hearing wheels stop at that time of night, and went out at a quick pace.

"Can you let us in for the night," said a voice, "or shall we send the boxes on to some hotel."

For a moment Jack could not imagine who these

late strangers were, until Victor said, "Oh, Jack, do you not remember me?"

That was enough; they were drawn in without a word, and boxes were lifted in after them. It was some minutes before either of the two friends spoke. They clasped hands as two most loving ones who had long been severed. When he did speak, Victor introduced his son, and then he told his sad news. Mrs. Pitt was soon brought down stairs, where she had been settling the children for the night, and then the little party formed themselves in a circle round the fire. Of course Jack and Victor had much to talk of. See what Victor had gone through since he left England. Jack, too: see how changed he was.

"Ah! never mind," said Victor, "we have both gone astray in our lives, sadly; but it has taught us both lessons, and let us hope we shall, year by year, live better lives than we ever have before, and in that way atone, in a small measure, for the great evil we have before committed."

Of course the next day found them talking fast to their old friend Avis Stoke, and it was arranged they should stay at her house, as she was alone, until something was decided: but it was not long so. Very soon Victor once more was master of a large drapery business, and his son was helping him. He often thought and talked of the time when he was in London as a poor street crier, and then looked at the position he

now held. Let us hope he will be spared for some years, to work for Him who brought him safely through all his trials; and that at last he may go and dwell with Him in glory, and once more join with her, his loved-one, in singing the songs of the blest.

